

New Mexico Conference of Catholic Bishops



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Most Rev. Oscar Cantú's Statement on Gov. Susanna Martinez's "PullTogether" Campaign to Address New Mexico's Children Poverty Issues

With the recent release of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* on family, we are reminded of the gift of family life to bring love and joy to its members. It saddens me to see the statistics that reflect the disparities our children are living in today in New Mexico. The Gospel calls us to love one another as Jesus has loved us. It should be out of this love and charity that all New Mexicans pull together to make sure the most vulnerable of our society receive the essentials for a happy, healthy and safe life. I am cautiously encouraged by the Department of Children, Youth and Family bringing forward a new campaign called "PullTogether". This campaign promises to bring people to resources. Now I pray those resources and programs are funded and that waiting lists, which turn into "no lists", no longer exist. As I visit 3rd world countries on behalf of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, I see well intentioned leaders seeking to find resources and common ground for the benefit of the poor, the marginalized, the immigrant and the refugee.

When I return to New Mexico, I see in our own back yard children living in poverty with New Mexico's highest ranking stature of children living in poverty and 3rd highest of children living in hunger. My heart sinks to know that we as leaders and as a society cannot bring to use the necessary resources. It is a justice issue that our children have such great need and we have such a great amount of money in our Land Grant Permanent School Fund. These are ethical and moral issues, which have obvious solutions. As we try to pull together, we should together be allowed to debate and vote on a constitutional amendment to fund early childhood programs from the Land Grant Permanent School Fund. My daily prayer is for our children and I commit myself to be an advocate and messenger for what Jesus called the ones God prefers: the widow, the orphan and the stranger.--
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